

The Voice of Vashon

Comments to NPRM
MM Docket 99-25

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When the word "Community" is used, Vashon-Maury Island comes instantly to mind. By the nature of its geography and socio-economic character, the Island can truly be categorized as "its own place". Near in distance to the major urban areas of the south Puget Sound in Washington state, Island life continues to escape from the vortex of big city life. One need only to look and listen to the proximate urban newspapers and broadcast media to become starkly aware that Vashon-Maury Island is a community under-served and under-represented. We are, accordingly, a prime candidate for "community-oriented" radio broadcasting and strongly support the proposed LPFM service described in MM Docket No. 99-25.

Note: See attached Map and "Statement of Need".

COMMERCIAL VS NON-COMMERCIAL

Like other closely-knit and relatively isolated communities, commercial activities are integral to life on Vashon-Maury Island. Indeed, "commerce" and "community" are inseparable. Almost all businesses on the Island are locally owned and operated. Competing with mainland giants of commerce, as well as with the growing internet commerce, is a never-ending chore for Island businesses. The opportunity to further advertise their wares and services, at reasonable costs, will enhance their ability to foster community cohesiveness, while at the same time provide a predictable revenue stream to an Island LPFM station. We, therefore, support commercial stations.

Note: See attached "Mission Statement".

TECHNICAL

As our need is for an LP1000 capability, we support the Skinner Petition, specifically as regards a 100 meters (328 ft) "HAAT". This technical capability is particularly important to our Island as we are approximately 13 miles long, with a need to "reach" an additional mile at either end for coverage of the ferry docks on the mainland.

Note: See attached map.

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OWNERSHIP AND ELIGIBILITY

The over-riding rationale for an LPFM service is to give a voice to communities/constituencies currently voiceless. Though "economies of scale" and "broadcast experience" have merit, we believe that these considerations are irrelevant to the proposed LPFM concept, whose purpose is not to make a profit or operate "efficiently". In fact, the LPFM concept should encourage "amateurs" who will operate in the public good. We conclude then, that ownership and operational control should be local only, and further that the owner of one (1) LPFM station should be prohibited from owning any other radio or TV station in the country.

APPLICATIONS AND AWARDS

We consider that, notwithstanding our support for commercial activity, auctioning to the "highest bidder" defeats the basic thrust of giving voice to the currently voiceless. What would prevent an applicant from "buying" an LPFM license in order to mute (or weaken) its voice, so as to minimize its impact on the "highest bidders" other interests? Accordingly, we support any approach to licensing which best serves the "public interest" (where "the public" is the community/constituency served).


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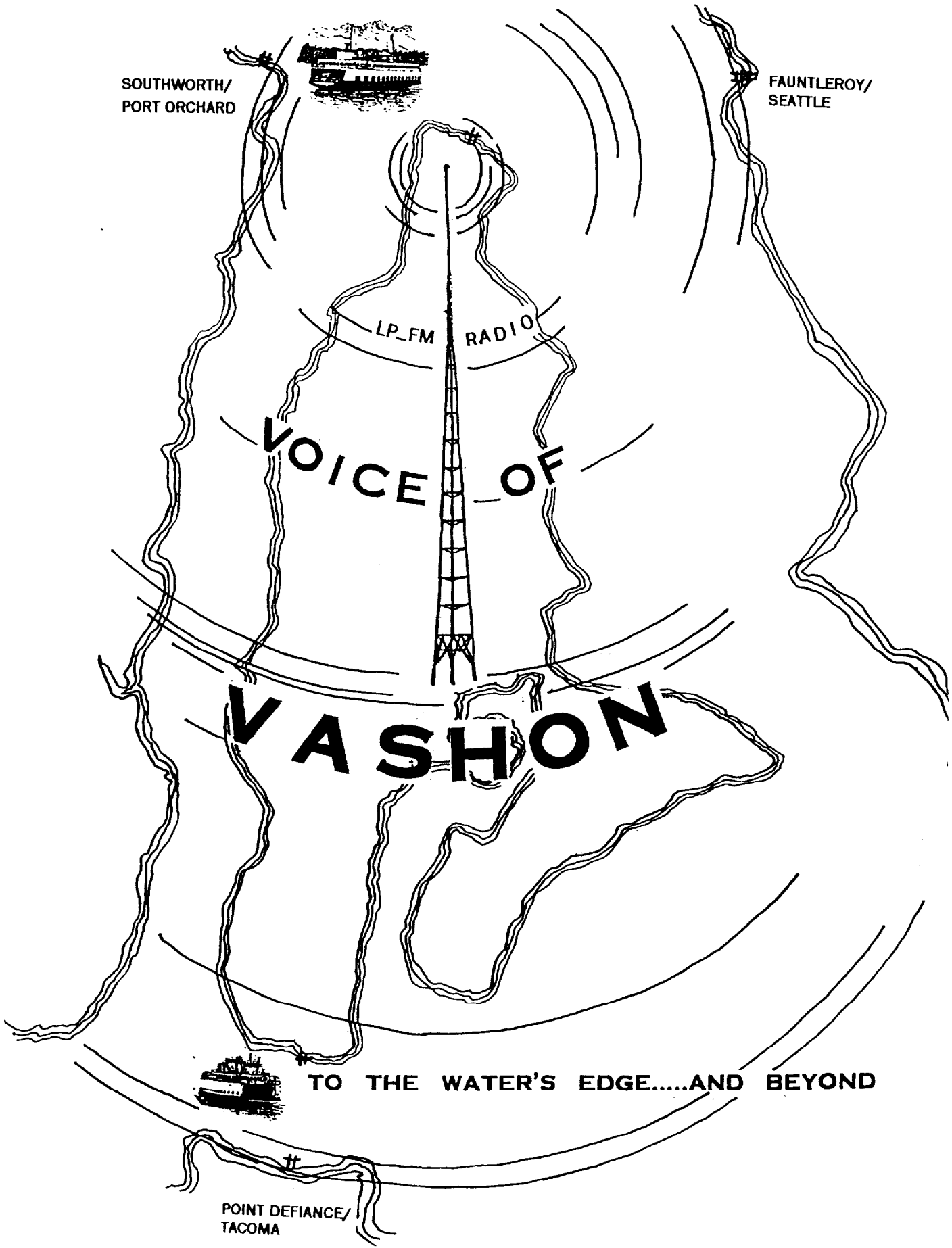
LP-FM RADIO

VOICE OF

VASHON

TO THE WATER'S EDGE.....AND BEYOND

POINT DEFIANCE/
TACOMA



The Voice of Vashon

Proposed LPFM radio station for Vashon/Maury Island, Washington

Statement of Need

Vashon/Maury Island is a small, rural, largely residential community of about eleven thousand people, located in the South Puget Sound, isolated from the mainland of King, Pierce and Kitsap counties by water. Hospitals, medical specialists, colleges, museums, major sports events, discount and department stores and other metropolitan amenities are accessible only by the Washington State Ferry system (or, in emergencies, by air).

The Island is heavily wooded and severe weather almost always means widespread power outages, landslides and road and school closures, making accurate, up to the minute weather information crucial, especially during the winter months. Since half or more of the community's employed residents work off-Island, timely information about road closures and disruption of ferry service is particularly important.

While there may be an occasional story about events on Vashon in the Seattle or Tacoma papers, the community's only real sources of important local news are publications such as the "*Beachcomber*", the Island's weekly newspaper, and the newly founded alternative weekly, "*The Ticket*". Neither of these can provide timely information during a crisis or emergency. Radio and TV serving Seattle-Tacoma almost never cover Island news and events.

This small Island is politically an unincorporated rural area of King County. The closest thing citizens have to a "local government" is the largely advisory Vashon Community Council which makes recommendations to the King County Council, the ultimate decision-making authority on matters affecting Vashon. Also serving as forums concerned with Island-unique issues are the local Chamber of Commerce, School Board and six elected Commissions (fire, water, sewer, parks, cemetery, airport). Meetings of these organizations are open to all residents but unless the issues under discussion have been widely publicized, are understood, and are to some degree controversial, attendance is usually sparse. An island radio station would greatly enhance citizen participation in community life by providing on-air discussions of important issues. An Island radio station could also provide live broadcasts of these meetings for Islanders unable to attend, thereby assuring that Islanders are well informed of local issues and can be more involved in making decisions directly affecting their lives.

Numerous service clubs and civic organizations are very active in meeting specific community needs. Their services need to be widely publicized to assure their effectiveness. Vashon also has an unusually large and active literary and arts community so Island art shows and theatrical, musical and literary productions would be an important source of program material. The island has both a large number of seniors and young people, with their special areas of interest and concern.

A radio station, dedicated to serving as a communications center for all Island activities, a broadcast 'Voice of Vashon,' would provide invaluable and currently unavailable information to all Islanders and would be a strong unifying force for the entire Vashon/Maury Community.

The Voice of Vashon

Proposal: *To establish a low power FM radio station located on and broadcasting exclusively to the isolated rural community of Vashon/Maury Island, Washington.*

Mission Statement

1. To provide the people of this unique island community, a variety of locally oriented programming and informational services, currently not available from any other source.
2. To function as a communications lifeline, broadcasting up-to-the minute information on the status of community facilities and services during the frequent weather related emergencies that often affect them.
i.e. power and water supplies, ferry service, road conditions, school schedules and available medical and nursing facilities.
3. To provide a public forum for discussion of important local, regional and state issues directly affecting Island life.
4. To broadcast live public meetings of the Vashon Community Council, School Board, and the various Island Commissions.
5. To provide a showcase for the wide variety of Island artists, writers and musicians and to publicize the programs and activities of the many Island service organizations.
6. To make available to the Island's numerous small businesses, a low cost advertising medium, focused on serving the small community in which they operate.